

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6885
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NDJAMENA 1555

USICA - FOR AF

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS CB
SUBJECT: PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION IN CHAD

1. ANALYSIS THAT FOLLOWS HAS BEEN WORKEDOUT BY PAO FROM EXTENSIVE CHADIAN CONTACTS AND REPRESENTS HIS GUESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION PREVAILING AMONG CHADIANS AT PRESENT TIME
2. AS TIME GOES ON AND REBEL FORCES CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR STRENGTH BY TAKING VILLAGES OF VARYING SIZES, AN INCREASING DISCONTENTMENT WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO GOVERN AND PROTECT IS FELT AMONG THE POPULACE.
3. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, CONSIDERABLE NUMBEROF APATHETIC CHADIANS WHO DO NOT REALLY CARE WHO GOVERNS. FOR THE MOST PART, THEY ARE THE ONES OUTSIDE THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SPHERE OF THE COUNTRY AND REPRESENT THE MOST UNEDUCATED.

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4. LEAVING THIS GROUP ASIDE, HOWEVER, EACH REBEL SUCCESS CONTRIBUTES TO THE FEELING THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS INCAPABLE OF HOLDING THE FORT. PUBLIC SUPPORT ERODES ALMOST DAILY AND RELIABLE REPORTS INDICATE THAT FROLINAT RECRUITING SUCCESSES SHOW UPSURGES AFTER EACH REBEL SUCCESS, NOT ONLY IN NDJAMENA BUT

ALSO IN PROVINCES AND PARTICULARLY UP NORTH IN INSECURE PORTIONS.

5. FRENCH EFFORTS TO HOLD AT THE NEO-MAGINOT LINE, EVEN IF SUCCESSFUL, WILL PROBABLY FAIL TO IMPACT UPON THIS SENSE OF PREVAILING DEFEATISM. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, RELATIVE NEOPHYTES REGARDING THE USAGE OF PROPAGANDA AND PUBLIC INFORMATION, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SWAY THE TIDE WITH WORDS. WHAT IS NEEDED TO RESTORE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT IS A LEGITIMATE OFFENSIVE MILITARY VICTORY. SOMETHING LIKE THE RETAKING OF FAYA LARGEAU WOULD DO MUCH TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PERCEPTION OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AS A CAPABLE AGGRESSIVE BODY OF MEN WITH SUBSTANTIAL MILITARY CLOUT. SUCH A SUCCESS IS, OF COURSE, IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT OVERT AND AGGRESSIVE FRENCH MILITARY SUPPORT WHICH, AT THE PRESENT TIME, DOES NOT SEEM TO BE IN THE CARDS.

6. MEANWHILE, REPORTS INDICATE INCREASING DISCONTENT ON PART OF MILITARY MEN, PARTICULARLY NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS WHOSE FORCE HAS BEEN DECIMATED BY RECENT DEFEATS AT FAYA AND BARDAI LAST YEAR. BASICALLY HARD-LINERS, THEY ARE IMPATIENT AT THE PERCEIVED LACK OF LEADERSHIP ABILITY OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. ESSENTIALLY LEADERLESS AND UNEDUCATED, THEY WILL

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PROBABLY DO LITTLE MORE THAN MUTTER, BUT DISCONTENTED SOLDIERS--WHAT FEW REMAIN-- WILL NOT DO MUCH FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, DESERTIONS APPARENTLY ARE RUNNING HIGH DESPITE RECRUITING EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THE GOC.

7. THE QUOTE INTELLECTUALS UNQUOTE, A SMALL BODY OF PEOPLE WITH NO DISCERNIBLE POLITICAL CLOUT, WERE STRONG SUPPORTERS OF NEGOTIATIONS, BUT WITH THE PRESENT BREAKDOWN, EVEN THEY ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE PESSIMISTIC.

8. MEANWHILE, A HERETOFORE QUIESCENT 95 PERCENT SARA UNIVERSITY STUDENT BODY SEEMS TO BE AWAKENING AND, WITH AN ALMOST AUDIBLE RIP VAN WINKLE GULP, HAS REALIZED IT HAS AN AWFUL LOT TO LOSE IN A NORTHERN-DOMINATED UNIVERSITY SYSTEM. THEY HAVE REQUESTED --AND HAVE BEEN GIVEN-- MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE SMC. REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE SMALL NUMBER OF ARAB STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS AT THE UNIVERSITY ARE BEING OPENLY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. ARAB PROFESSORS ARE REPORTEDLY BEING DENIED THE USE

OF CLASSROOMS TO MEET THEIR COMMITMENTS.

9. ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE INCREASING ISOLATION OF THE SARAS ARE RECENT DISTURBANCES IN BONGOR IN THE PREFECTURE OF MAYO-KEBI. ACRIMONIOUS FEELINGS ARE DEVELOPING ON THE PART OF THE NON-SARA MAJORITY IN THAT AREA OVER PERCEIVED (AND ACTUAL) SARA DOMINATION. REPORTS OF ROADBLOCKS AND GENERAL HARRASSMENT OF SARAS HAVE COMETO THE EMBASSY'S ATTENTION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NDJAMENA 1555

10. IF THE MUCH BANDIED ABOUT RUMORS OF URBAN TERRORISM EVER DO INDEED COME TO PASS, A FRENCH EXODUS OF PRIVATE CITIZENS CANBE EXPECTED TO PROBABLY TAKE PLACE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY INSTITUTE REPRESSIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE POPULACE AND THE REBELS WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT EVEN NDJAMENA IS NOT SAFE. IF THE REBELS PLAY IT RIGHT AND CONFINE THEIR ATTTKKS TO EXPATRIATES OR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS, THEY SHOULD PROBABLY GAIN SUPPORT. SHOULD THEY SUCCUMB TO THE LURE OF INDISCRIMATE ATTACKS, THERE COULD BE A PRO-GOVERNMENT GROUNDSWELL. IT SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT NDJAMENA IS REPORTEDLY SOME 50 PERCENT MUSLIM. THE GOC POLICE FORCE IS WEAK OPPORTUNITIES AND SECURE PLACES ABOUND FOR TERRORISTS. THEY WOULD NO DOUBT FIND SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT AMONG THE POPULACE OF NDJAMENA, ALREADY DIVIDED INTO ETHNIC ENCLAVES OF SARA AND ASAB QUARTERS.

11. ANY ATTEMPTS BY THE PRESENT SARA GOVERNMENT TO

BRING NORTHERNERS INTO THE RULING STRUCTURE WOULD
BE SEEN BY THE MOST OBSERVES AS TOO LITTLE TOO LATE
AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO FATHOM WHY ANY SELF-RESPECTING
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NORTHERNER WOULD WANT TO JOIN UP WITH WHAT. AT THE
PRESENTTIME LOOKS LIKE A LOSING CAUSE. THERE
MAY BE A FEW QUOTE UNCLE TOMS UNQUOTE WHO MAY COME
ALONG AT THIS LATE DATE, BUT THEIR FOLLOWING WOULD
BE RELATIVELY INSIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF POLITICAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND MILITARY CLOUT.

12. INCREASING ISOLATION OF THE SARA GOVERNMENT CAN
BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE, THEN, SHORT OF A MASSIVE
MILITARY VICTORY. THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS
HELD ON THIS LONG DESPITE ETERNAL PREDICTIONS OF ITS
IMMINENT DOWNFALL IS A TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT MALLOUM'S
ASTUTENESS IN JUGGLING ALL THE FACTIONS AROUND HIM.
BUT THE JUGGLER IS TIRED AND EACH TIME ANOTHER BALL IS
INTRODUCED INTO THE ACT, IT BECOMES MORE AND MORE
DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE THE PERFORMANCE SUCCESSFULLY.
IT COULD BE THAT WHEN ONE FALLS, ALL FALL.

13. WHAT REMAINS THEN, IS THE FRENCH AND THE DEPTH
OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE PRESENT PRO-WESTERN
GOVERNMENT AND TO A SARA-DOMINATED CHAD. IF IT IS
STRONG, AND THE NEO-MAGINOT LINE HOLDS, THE PRESENT
GOVERNMENT, WITHPERHAPS A FEW COSMETIC CHANGES,
CAN MAINTAIN ITS POWER BASE UNLESS URBAN TERRORISM
COMES TO PASS. THE REBELS AND QADHAFI ARE UPPING THE
ANTE FOR THE FRENCH AND THINKING CHADIANS ARE
WATCHING THE SIUTATION CAREFULLY. HOPE MAY SPRING
ETERNAL IN TIMES LIKE THIS AND THE DIEHARDS STILL WAIT
FOR SIGNS OF AMERICANASSISTANCE AGAINST THE PERCEIVED
SOVIET/LIBYAN THREAT. THE IRONY OF IT ALL IS THAT LESS
THAN THREE YEARS AGO IT WAS THE PRESENT GOC THAT THREW
OUT THE FRENCH MILITARY UMBRELLA, A MOVE WHICH AT
THAT TIME MET WITH POPULAR APPROVAL. SOME 500 OF
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CHAD'S REMAINING SOLDIERS ARE BASED AT NDJAMENA'S
27TH OF SEPTEMBER CAMP, NAMED AFTER THE DATE OF THE
FRENCH DEPARTURE IN 1975, HOPING THAT THE FRENCH WILL
BE BACK. THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE MUCH ELSE TO HOPE
FOR NOW. POLITICS DOES, INDEED, MAKE FOR STRANGE
BEDFELLOWS. DALSIMER

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